



## **U.S. EMBASSY – BAGHDAD**

### **News Release**



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### **Federal District Court Judge Joseph N. Laplante and United States Attorney John P. Kacavas Visit Iraq**

Federal District Court Judge for New Hampshire Joseph N. Laplante and U.S. Attorney for New Hampshire John P. Kacavas visited Iraq June 20 – 27 for a comprehensive look at U.S. Government rule of law projects, programs and facilities and to engage with Iraqi legal audiences regarding the roles of prosecutors and judges in the United States, discuss best practices and to encourage relationship-building among Iraqi law practitioners.

A key feature of the program was teaching two investigative and judicial seminars. At the Judicial Development Institute Judge Laplante and Mr. Kacavas taught an investigative and judicial seminar, the first of its kind in bringing together Iraqi judges, prosecutors and an array of law enforcement and legal professionals from across GOI ministries and departments, including the Commission on Integrity. Subjects included judicial independence, cooperation and corroboration with other agencies to promote evidence-based investigations. A similar seminar was conducted at the Judicial Training Institute, the premier training center in Iraq for new judges.

Judge Laplante expressed his admiration for the Iraqi judiciary, which he said “has demonstrated an enduring commitment to rule of law and judicial independence during exceedingly difficult times.”

Judge Laplante and Mr. Kacavas also met with Chief Justice Medhat al-Mahmoud, the Deputy Minister of Justice, judges from the Iraqi High Tribunal, officials from the Commission on Integrity and human rights advisors. They visited Baghdad Police College, where they encouraged progress made in training female officers, and developing a modern, comprehensive law enforcement curriculum.

United States Attorney Kacavas observed that “this week has clearly shown that Iraqi judges, investigators and prosecutors understand that rule of law is the enemy of oppression. Their dedication in these troubled times is truly inspirational.”

A unique part of the program for Judge Laplante included a boxing event at the U.S. Embassy for Iraqi youth. A veteran boxing referee certified by the U.S. Boxing Federation, Judge Laplante held a clinic and addressed the 24 amateur boxers and their coaches from the Baghdad Boxing Club, explaining that his roles as a courtroom jurist and ring referee were similar in many respects.

A graduate of Georgetown University, Joseph Normand Laplante was appointed a United States District Judge in 2007 following a career as a prosecutor in two U.S. Attorney's Offices (Boston, MA and Concord, NH) and the Office of the Attorney General for the State of New Hampshire.

John Kacavas was appointed United States Attorney for the District of New Hampshire by President Obama in 2009. Prior to his appointment he held federal and state offices, including Chief of the Homicide Unit in the New Hampshire Attorney General's Office, and Trial Attorney for the United States Department of Justice Campaign Finance Task Force. Kacavas is a graduate of Boston College Law School and American University in Washington, D.C.

The visit by Judge Laplante and U.S. Attorney Kacavas is part of a series of Embassy and State Department-sponsored engagements by U.S. judges and legal professionals addressing key Strategic Speaker Initiative themes including rule of law and civil society. Their visit also supports the Strategic Framework Agreement between the United States and Iraq, which calls for activities designed to promote respect for rule of law.



Federal District Court Judge for New Hampshire Joseph N. Laplante (left) and U.S. Attorney for New Hampshire John P. Kacavas at the Judicial Training Institute in Baghdad, Iraq.

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